

R e m a r k s

Objections to Claim Form

Claims 14 and 16 are objected to over matters of clarity and consistency.

Claim 14 is objected to because the limitation of "the end cap" was not previously recited. Claim 14 has been returned to a dependent form, now depending from claim 12 where the end cap feature is properly introduced.

Claim 16 is objected of because of a lack of term consistency, but has now been amended to refer to "the support extension", a limitation properly introduced by claim 15.

Novelty Rejection

Claims 10 and 15 stand rejected as being anticipated by US Patent No. 6,422,898 to Wu.

Claim 10 has been returned to dependent claim status and now depends from amended independent claim 5.

Claim 15 has been amended to incorporate a number of limitations from allowed independent claim 1, which are not found in Wu. For example, claim 15 has been amended to require the support extensions to extend beyond the length of the track and to also require the first and second pivot points to be located beyond the length of the track. Nothing in Wu suggests appending a support extension beyond the length of a track and locating first and second pivot points beyond the length of the track.

Obviousness Rejections

Claims 5–8 and 16 stand rejected as being obvious over US Patent No. 6,422,898 to Wu.

Claim 5 has been amended to incorporate most of the subject matter of cancelled claim 8 and other subject matter drawn from the specification (see paragraph 40 in particular). A tab in one of the first and second links is required to be engageable with a capture recess in the other of the first and second lengths for transferring a limited range of angular motion between the first and second links. In addition, the tab and recess are required to be shaped to accommodate unequal angular velocities of the first and second links about the first and second pivot points.

The Examiner equates the claimed tab to one of Wu's pivot pins 311 and the claimed capture recess to the bearing surface through which another of Wu's pivot pins is received. The links of Wu that are mounted on the separate pivot pins are not connected by way of a tab and capture recess for transferring angular motion between them. Each of Wu's links is independently rotatable about a different one of the pivot pins. The pivot pin of one of Wu's links is not engageable with the bearing surface of another of Wu's links for transferring angular motion between the links.

The limitation regarding the bearing surface underlying the "entire" length of the first length was removed from claim 5 because it was accorded no patentable significance.

Claim 6 has been amended to specify that the integral end cap is connected to the support extension beyond the length of the track. Wu's retaining block 40 is

connected to Wu's end cap only indirectly through Wu's track. No suggestion is found for a connection between Wu's end cap and retaining block beyond the length of the track.

Claim 16 depends from amended claim 15 and is further distinguished on this basis as explained above.

Claims 8, 9, and 13 stand rejected as being obvious over US Patent No. 6,422,898 to Wu in view of US Patent No. 3,838,537 to Stavenau et al.

The Examiner admits that Wu "fails to disclose the first and second link to include cooperating members or a tab and recess arrangement that engage one another" and that Wu "does not disclose the first and second links to include contacting surfaces engaging each other to form a stop." Both of these features are said to be found in the mating gear teeth of Stavenau et al.

Claim 8 has been cancelled, and claim 9 now depends from amended claim 5, which further requires the claimed tab and capture recess to be shaped to accommodate unequal angular velocities of the first and second links about the first and second pivot pins. This is explained in paragraph 40 of the subject specification. The gear teeth of Stavenau et al. do not accommodate such motion, which is the reason the engaging tab and recess structures do not take the conventional form of gears. Note that the illustrated bar assembly of Stavenau et al. takes the approximate form of a parallelogram, whereas the corresponding linkage is depicted more broadly in the subject disclosure as a trapezoid. The claimed tab and capture recess structure as set forth in amended independent claim 5 accommodates the irregular motions associated with a broader range of linkage assemblies that are not limited to a parallelogram form.

Claim 9 requires the tab and capture recess to profitably engage through only a portion of the motion between the open and closed positions of the first and second links. Stavenau et al.'s gears remain engaged throughout the entire range of intended motion between open and closed positions.

Claim 13 has been amended to depend from claim 11, which is already deemed to contain patentable subject matter.

Claims 12 and 14 stand rejected as being obvious over US Patent No. 6,422,898 to Wu in view of US Patent Application Publication No 2003/0213100 to Brain et al. .

Both claims 12 and 14 have been amended to depend from rewritten independent claim 11, which is already deemed to contain patentable subject matter.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1–4 stand allowed.

Claim 11 is objected to only as to its form and is deemed allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claim. Claim 11 has been rewritten in independent form incorporating most of the limitations of its base claim 5 (as previously amended). The limitation regarding the bearing surface underlying the "entire" length of the first length was removed because it was accorded no patentable significance. In addition to claims 12 and 14, claim 13 has also been amended to depend from rewritten claim 11.

The Examiner's careful consideration of these claims is appreciated.

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In view of the above, all of the remaining pending claims 1-7 and 9-16 are believed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejected claims and allowance of all pending claims are respectfully requested. For any questions on this response or the application, the Examiner is invited to contact applicant's representative at the telephone number given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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